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ABSTRACT

An account of the hearing held by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on the Mexican American community's problems with civil rights, this report does not necessarily represent the views of the Commission but is published to stimulate public interest in the problems confronting Mexican Americans. For nearly 6 months prior to the hearing (held in San Antonio, Texas, in December 1968), staff members laid the groundwork with a field representative in San Antonio for coordination of onsite activities. Some 1000 persons were interviewed; data were collected and analyzed; and nearly 80 persons--from barrio residents to state officials, businessmen to farmworkers, students to school superintendents--were requested to speak under subpoena. Clergymen, law enforcement officials, and 3 Mexican American families also testified. Major areas explored were employment, education, the administration of justice, housing, and political representation. "The total picture of economic deprivation, of relegation to the meanest employment, of educational suppression, and of restricted opportunity in almost every phase of life unfolded." (BO)

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U.S. Commission on
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U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to:

Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;

Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution;

Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws;

Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws; and

Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

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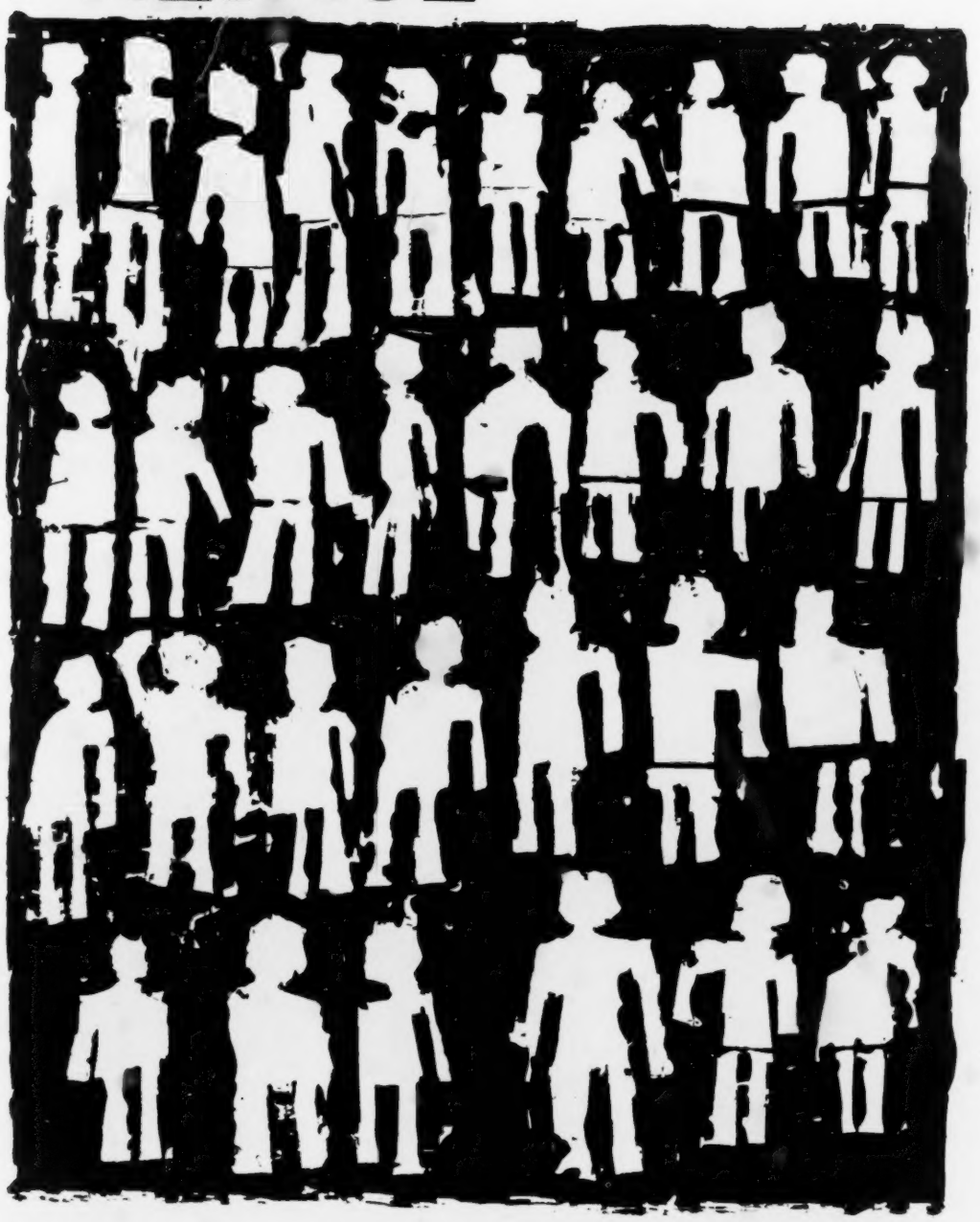
PREFACE



The predicament of a people who are historically part of the Southwest yet paradoxically treated as strangers in their own land was the focus of the hearing the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held in San Antonio, Texas, in December 1968.

For the first time, in a public setting, the Mexican American community's problems in civil rights were the central topic of a Commission hearing. It was not, however, the first time that Mexican American needs and aspirations in the field of equal opportunity and civil rights had been considered by the Commission. At previous hearings in Phoenix, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, Mexican American spokesmen had presented some of the issues and demands of the Spanish-speaking community. State Advisory Committees in the five Southwestern States of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, had addressed themselves to problems concerning the Mexican American people, and occasionally had issued reports of their findings.

But the San Antonio hearing concentrated for the first time the Commission's full attention and resources. Texas, where no hearing had been held before by the Commission and with the second largest Spanish surname population, and San Antonio, the Texas city with the largest Mexican American community, offered a logical site for the weeklong hearing of December 9–14.

For nearly 6 months prior to the hearing, staff members delved into the conditions of life and work among Mexican Americans filtering out the issues related to civil rights and laying the groundwork for the hearing. A field representative was assigned to San Antonio for coordination of onsite activities.

Some 1,000 persons were interviewed; volumes of data were collected and analyzed; nearly 80 persons in all were requested to speak under subpena—from barrio residents to State officials, businessmen to farm workers, students to school superintendents. Clergymen, law enforcement officials, and three families also testified.

The hearing explored major areas of concern to Mexican Americans and the Commission: employment, education, and the administration of justice. Problems in housing and political representation were also considered. The total picture of economic deprivation, of relegation to the meanest employment, of educational suppression, and of restricted opportunity in almost every phase of life unfolded.

Expressing great empathy with the story that developed was a predominantly Mexican American audience that daily filled the auditorium at Our Lady of the Lake College where the hearing was conducted.

What follows is an account of the Commission's hearing by Rubén Salazar, a California journalist. Salazar is currently news director for the Spanish-language television station KMEX of Los Angeles. He also writes a column for the Los Angeles Times on the problems of the Spanish-speaking people of the United States. He has been a foreign correspondent in Vietnam, in the Dominican Republic, and in Mexico City. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Commission. The report is published for the purpose of stimulating public interest and concern in the problems confronting Mexican Americans.

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INTRODUCTION

The San Antonio hearing of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights which probed into the social anguish of Mexican Americans was born in protest and began in controversy.

As the country's second largest minority, Mexican Americans had been virtually ignored by public and private reformers. There was vague realization that they had educational, employment, and cultural problems. But it was felt that language was the basic reason for these problems. And, it was concluded, once this accident of birth was repaired, Mexican Americans would melt into the Caucasian pot, just as Italians, Germans, and Poles had.

Then came the black revolution.

It exploded partly from a condition which had been known all along but was now the basis for a black-white confrontation: the color of one's skin was all too important in America. White was good. Black was bad.

Faced with an identity crisis, many young Mexican Americans—excited by black militancy—decided that they had been misled by their elders into apathetic confusion. It came as a shock at first: Mexican Americans felt caught between the white and the black. Though counted as "white" by the Bureau of the Census, Mexican Americans were never really thought of as such. Though the speaking of foreign languages was considered highly sophisticated, Mexican Americans were condemned for speaking Spanish.

The ambivalence felt vaguely and in silence for so long seemed to crystalize in the light of the black revolution. A Mexican American was neither Mexican nor American. He was neither white nor black. What was he then and where was he going? The young, the militant, and the angry wanted to know.

When the Commission met in San Francisco in May 1967, Mexican Americans walked out protesting there was not a Mexican American Commissioner to represent them or enough attention accorded their problems.

In October of that year, the U.S. Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs held a hearing in El Paso on the problems of the Spanish-speaking. The hearing, conducted at the same time President Johnson officially returned to Mexico a disputed piece of border land [El Chamizal], ended on a sour note.

Governor John Connally of Texas, accused of allowing the use of Texas Rangers to break strikes by Mexican American farm workers in the Rio Grande Valley, was roundly booed and hooted by Mexican Americans in the presence of President Johnson. Because the President was there, the incident was given wide publicity and it marked a rare national exposure of rising Mexican American militancy.

In other areas of the Southwest, the strike-boycott of California table grapes led by Cesar Chavez was becoming a national and international cause. Reies Lopez Tijerina's land grants struggle in New Mexico and its adversaries introduced violence to the movement. There were the high school walkouts in East Los Angeles by Mexican American students, and Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzales, head of the Denver-based Crusade for Justice, was preaching ethnic nationalism. Many Mexican Americans joined the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1968.

For the first time, many Americans became aware of Mexican American discontent. There was talk now of brown power.

In November 1968, President Johnson named the first Mexican American to the Commission, Dr. Hector P. Garcia, a physician from

Corpus Christi, Texas, and founder of the American G.I. Forum. A Commission hearing which would center on Mexican American problems was scheduled for December 9–14, in San Antonio.

Protests helped bring it about. Now the controversy would begin.

Some Mexican American leaders charged that Washington was meddling in something it knew nothing about and so would make things worse instead of better. They felt any problems Mexican Americans might have should be solved locally, by local leadership. The younger and the more militant Chicano leadership retorted that the problems had intentionally been ignored and that national exposure would bring new, more imaginative solutions. Traditional leadership, they claimed, had failed.

These strong points of view, aired publicly before the Commission met, hint at the diversity of thought and feeling found among the some six to seven million Mexican Americans, most of whom live in California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado.

There are many splits in the black movement. But there's something the American Negro knows for sure—he's black. He can easily define his problems as a race which make him part of a cohesive force. This is what has forged the beginning of black power in the United States. As yet, most Mexican Americans seem not to identify with any one single overriding problem as Americans. Though they know they're somehow different, many still cling to the idea that Mexican Americans are Caucasian, thus white, thus "one of the boys".

Many prove it: by looking and living like white Americans, by obtaining and keeping good jobs and by intermarrying with Anglos who rarely think of it as a "mixed marriage," to these people, Mexican Americans are assimilating well into white American society. They felt uncomfortable about the Commission's hearing because in their eyes it would merely tend to continue the polarization of Anglos and Mexican Americans at a time in which they felt it was disappearing.

To many other Mexican Americans, especially the young activists, Mexican Americans have for too long been cheated by tacitly agreeing to be Caucasian in name only. They say they would rather be proud of their Indian blood than uncertain about their Caucasian status. They feel they can achieve greater dignity by identifying with pre-Anglo Mexican Indian civilizations and even the Conquistadores than by pretending that they can truly relate to the *Mayflower* and early New England Puritanism.

This division of feeling will continue and perhaps widen. The hearing, however, clearly showed that people who are indigenous to the Southwest seem sometimes strangers in their own land and certainly in many ways curiously alienated from their fellow Americans.

1 AQUÍ NO SE HABLA

You know it almost from the beginning: speaking Spanish makes you different. Your mother, father, brothers, sisters, and friends all speak Spanish. But the bus driver, the teacher, the policeman, the store clerk, the man who comes to collect the rent—all the people who are doing important things--do not. Then the day comes when your teacher—who has taught you the importance of many things—tells you that speaking Spanish is wrong. You go home, kiss your mother, and say a few words to her in Spanish. You go to the window and look out and your mother asks you what's the matter?

Nada, mama, you answer, because you don't know what is wrong. . . .

Howard A. Glickstein, then Acting Staff Director of the Commission asked witness Edgar Lozano, a San Antonio high school student, whether he has ever been punished for speaking Spanish at school. Yes, in grammar, in junior high, and in senior high schools, he answers.

". . . they took a stick to me," says Edgar. "It really stayed in your mind. Some things, they don't go away as easy as others."

Edgar relates with some bitterness and anger the times he was beaten by teachers for speaking Spanish at school after "getting a lecture about, if you want to be an American, you have got to speak English."

Glickstein tries to ask Edgar another question and the boy, this this time more sad than angry, interrupts and says:

"I mean, how would you like for somebody to come up to you and tell you what you speak is a dirty language? You know, what your mother speaks is a dirty language. You know, that is the only thing I ever heard at home.

ESPAÑOL

"A teacher comes up to you and tells you, 'No, no. You know that is a filthy language, nothing but bad words and bad thoughts in that language.'

"I mean, they are telling you that your language is bad. . . . Your mother and father speak a bad language, you speak a bad language. I mean you communicate with dirty words, and nasty ideas.

". . . that really stuck to my mind."

Edgar, like many Mexican Americans before him, had been scarred with the insults of an Anglo world which rejects everything except carbon copies of what it has decreed to be "American." You start being different and you end up being labeled as un-American. An Anglo-oriented school in a Mexican American barrio can do things to the teachers, too. Bad communication can sorely twist the always sensitive relation between teacher and pupil.

Under questioning from David Rubin, the Commission's Acting General Counsel, W. Dain Higdon, principal of San Antonio's Hawthorne Junior High School, 65 percent Mexican American, asserted that he felt there was something in the background or characteristics of the Mexican Americans which inhibits high achievement.

Mexicans or Mexican Americans, Higdon told the Commission, have a "philosophical concept" in dealing with life which says *lo que dios quiera,* "what God wishes."

An Anglo, on the other hand, Higdon continued, says "in God we trust," not "this is how it shall be and you are limited."

". . . you have unlimited horizons," Higdon explained to the Commission. "And whenever some situation befalls me [as an Anglo], I say it is my fault. Whenever some situation befalls a Mexican American, he may say it is his fault, but more generally and from a heritage standpoint he would be inclined to say, *lo que dios quiera*."

Rubin: Would it be fair to say that you feel there are genetic factors involved which account for the differences in achievements, that mixture of genes causes differences in people?

Higdon: Well, when you were in my office, I made that statement to you and I will stick by it. . . .

The Mexican American child learns early that he is different. Then he learns that speaking Spanish prevents his becoming a good American. It's at this time, perhaps, when he most needs sensitive guidance. Yet, how do some teachers see the role of their profession?

Rubin: Did you state in an interview with me and with another staff member that the obligations of the teacher were first to complete paperwork and secondly to maintain discipline?

Higdon: Yes, sir, I did.

Rubin: And thirdly, to teach?

Higdon: Yes, sir.

What can a school, in which teacher and student speak not only different languages but are also on different emotional wave lengths. do to a Mexican American child?

This kind of school, Dr. Jack Forbes of Berkeley's Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, told the Commission:

"Tends to lead to a great deal of alienation, a great deal of hostility, it tends to lead also to a great deal of confusion, where the child comes out of that school really not knowing who he is, not knowing what he should be proud of, not knowing what language he should speak other than English, being in doubt as to whether he should completely accept what Anglo people have been telling him and forget his Mexican identity, or whether he should listen to what his parents and perhaps other people have said and be proud of his Mexican identity."

The word "Mexican" has been and still is in many places in the Southwest a word of contempt. Mexican Americans refer to themselves as Mexicanos or Chicanos with the ease of those who know and understand each other. But when some Anglos talk about "Mexicans" the word takes on a new meaning, almost the counterpart of "nigger."

The Mexican Americans' insistence on keeping the Spanish language is but one aspect of cultural differences between Anglos and Mexican Americans.

Values differ between these two groups for a variety of historical reasons. Mexicans have deep rural roots which have produced a sense of isolation. Spanish Catholicism has given Mexicans an attitude of fatalism and resignation. Family ties are extremely important and time, or clock-watching, is not.

Luis F. Hernandez, assistant professor of education at San Fernando Valley State College in Los Angeles, has described the differences this way:

"Mexican American values can be said to be directed toward tradition, fatalism, resignation, strong family ties, a high regard for authority, paternalism, personal relations, reluctance to change, a greater orientation to the present than to the future and a greater concern for being than doing.

"The contrasting Anglo-American values can be said to be directed toward change, achievement, impersonal relations, efficiency, progress, equality, scientific rationalization, democracy, individual action and reaction, and a greater concern for doing than being."

Distortion of or deletion of Mexicans' contribution to the Southwest in history books can inhibit a Mexican American child from the beginning of his schooling.

State Senator Joe Bernal of Texas told the Commission that the "schools have not given us any reason to be proud" of being Mexican Americans. People running the schools "have tried to take away our language," the senator continued, and so Mexican American children very early are made to feel ashamed of the Spanish language and of being Mexican.

The children start building up defenses such as insisting on being called "Latin" or "Hispano" or "Spanish American" because, said Bernal, "they want no reference made to being Mexican." One of the

reasons for this, Bernal told the Commission, is that "it has been inculcated" in the minds of grammar school children that the Mexican "is no good" by means of, for instance, overly and distortedly emphasizing the Battle of the Alamo and ignoring all contributions made by Mexicans in the Southwest.

To be Spanish, of course, is something else. Spanish has a European connotation and Europe is the motherland.

Carey McWilliams in his "North From Mexico" explains that "the Hispanic heritage of the Southwest has two parts: the Spanish and the Mexican-Indian. Originally one heritage, unified in time, they have long since been polarized. Carefully distinguished from the Mexican, the Spanish heritage is now enshrined throughout the Southwest. It has become the sacred or templar tradition of which the Mexican-Indian inheritance is the secular or profane counterpart . . . ."

Dr. Forbes noticed on his arrival in San Antonio for the hearing that things have not changed.

". . . the San Antonio greeter magazine which I picked up in a hotel lobby and which had the statement about the history of San Antonio said nothing about the Mexican heritage of this region, talking only about the glorious Spanish colonial era and things of this nature. . . ."

To be Spanish is fine because white is important and Spain is white.

Dr. Forbes reminded the Commission that "first of all, the Mexican American population is in great part a native population in the Southwest. It is not an immigrant population. Now this nativity in the Southwest stems not only from the pre-1848 period during the so-called Spanish colonial and Mexican periods, but it also stems from the fact that many people who today identify as Mexican Americans or in some areas as Hispanos, are actually of local Indian descent. . . ."

Aurelio Manuel Montemayor, who taught in San Felipe High School at Del Rio, Texas, explained to the Commission how in his view all this is ignored in the school curriculum.

Quoting from a State-approved textbook, Montemayor said the book related how "the first comers to America were mainly Anglo-Saxons but soon came Dutchmen, Swedes, Germans, Frenchmen, Africans, then the great 19th century period of immigration added to our already melting pot. Then later on, it [the textbook] said, the Spaniards came."

"So my students," continued Montemayor, "had no idea where they came from" and wondered whether "they were part of American society." This frustrated Montemayor so much, he said, that he told his students "let's see if we can write our own textbook." He instructed them to write papers on the subject, "Who Am I?"

"They told me in their words," Montemayor said, "that they were inferior to the standards of this country. That no matter how much they tried they could never be blonds and blue-eyed."

San Felipe High School is located in the San Felipe Independent School District of the city of Del Rio which also contains the Del Rio Independent School District. San Felipe High School has about 97 percent Mexican Americans and the Del Rio High School has about 50 percent Anglos and 49 percent Mexican Americans. Though the Laughlin Air Force Base is located in the San Felipe Independent School District, the base children are bused to the more affluent and less Mexican American Del Rio High School.

Some of Montemayor's students, prompted by the teacher's concern with self-identity, decided to work on a project called: Does San Felipe Have an Inferiority Complex?

"They studied the schools, they studied the discontent in the San Felipe Community," Montemayor told the Commission. A boy and a girl interviewed parents at the air base and asked them what they thought of the San Felipe schools and whether they would allow their children to attend there.

The boy and girl told Montemayor that base officials had them escorted to the gate when they discovered what they were doing. But not before a base mother told the young pollsters what she thought of San Felipe.

Montemayor: . . . [a woman told my students] that she wouldn't send her children to [San Felipe] district schools. They had them there for a semester, the neighborhoods were so dirty and all of that, and that the schools were falling down. And, of course, the students were finding this out on their own and, of course, as far as morale, it couldn't have been lower.

Many Mexican American youths, despite their low morale, continue on their business as best they can even though lamenting, as some of Montemayor's students, that no matter how much they try they will never be blond and blue-eyed.

Others become ultramilitant as did David Sanchez, prime minister of the Brown Berets in Los Angeles, who told a newsman: "There are very few gabachos [Anglos] who don't turn me off. To the Anglo, justice means 'just us'."

And many others, as did some 1,500 Mexican Americans from throughout the Southwest who last March attended a "Chicano Youth Liberation Conference" in Denver, will adopt, in their anger, frustration, and disillusion, a resolution which condemns the "brutal gringo invasion of our territories".

2

LA FRONTERA

The marchers, followers of farm labor leader Cesar Chavez, finished their 100-mile trek across the blazing hot desert from Indio, California, to the border town of Calexico on Sunday, May 18, 1969. According to the plan, Chavez' people were supposed to hold a solidarity rally with Mexican national farm workers at the international line. But the rally never took place.

The official explanation was that the Mexican Government did not want its people to get involved in an American labor dispute, the California table grape strike-boycott. Actually, the Mexican workers who live in Mexico's border towns and work in American borderland farms and in American border cities are very much involved in a unique American labor controversy. As commuters, the Mexican workers are the unwitting pawns of an international labor dispute without precedence. The 1,800-mile United States-Mexico border stretches from the coast of California to the Gulf of Mexico in an irregular line which orators like to describe as the only such unfortified frontier in the world. This does not mean that "armies" do not crisscross this border every day.

Perhaps the most telling contrast between the two countries is that while an army of fun-seeking American tourists crosses the border into Mexico, another army of job-hungry Mexicans crosses the line into the United States.

The American tourists, for the most part, have a good effect on the Mexican economy and this army is welcomed with good will. The army

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of job-hungry Mexicans which commutes across the international line has an adverse effect on American labor. For many years this was passively taken for granted. But now, in the age of activism, a confrontation seems inevitable.

The situation is a highly complicated and sensitive one because it involves mostly Mexicans against Mexican Americans. That is, the poorest of the poor Mexican nationals vying for jobs with Mexican Americans who are striving to attain U.S. economic standards. Result: Mexican nationals, because they're understandably willing to work for less, take jobs away from Mexican Americans.

Even in their resentment, Mexican Americans find it difficult to condemn these commuters. They, their parents, or grandparents were in the same boat not too long ago. The fact remains that Mexicans are pitted against Mexican Americans for the lowest paid jobs in America.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that U.S. borderland businessmen fear that any effort to terminate the commuter program would result in a retaliatory refusal by Mexico to allow its citizens to carry on their extensive trade in American border towns.

(Cheap labor on the Mexican side of the border attracts industrialists as much as it does growers. A free industrial zone program in Mexican border towns was started in 1965, whereby American industrialists can set up factories there under a special program which exempts them from all import duties. Mexican workers reportedly earn as little as $2 a day in these American factories. The American labor movement, which helped kill the bracero [Mexican farm labor] program, claims that in effect under this new plan—since braceros are no longer available in the United States—the work is now being taken to the braceros.)

Former Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, in commenting on a court suit concerning the commuter problem, voiced his concern over United States-Mexico diplomatic relations should the commuter system be stopped.

"[If] as a result of a substantial reduction in the commuter traffic across the border between Mexico and the United States, a significant number of Mexican nationals would be deprived of their earning power, the trade between the two countries would be substantially reduced," the Secretary said. "We would expect that this would have an immediate depressing effect on the economy of the region on both sides of the border. Moreover, the loss of gainful employment and dollar earnings by 30,000 to 50,000 Mexican nationals, estimated at over $50 million annually, might compel the Government of Mexico to consider compensating steps, which would further damage the economic life of the region."

This led a Commission staff report to conclude that:

"The Mexican American in the border area is thus charged with the responsibility of protecting our diplomatic relations. The economic

burdens involved in this charge, he may justifiably feel, should be borne by the Nation as a whole, not thrust upon a minority of its citizens."

The Commission staff report notes that: "The commuter system has deep roots. People have commuted to work across the United States-Mexico border since the border's inception. Up until the 1920's this traffic was unrestricted."

Since then, the law has been changed so that a Mexican national wishing to cross the border to work in the United States must obtain immigrant status. When he does, he is issued an alien registration card and in the vernacular of those concerned with the problem becomes a "green carder" after the color of the card.

There is nothing in the law which says the green carder, though technically an immigrant, must live in the United States. Because the green carder usually performs agricultural work in the U.S. borderlands or menial jobs in the U.S. border cities, he prefers to live on the Mexican side to save money.

The result is that these commuters, not really immigrants at all, use their green card merely as a working pass which permits them to cross the border. Basically then, the traffic of commuters is almost as unrestricted as it was in the twenties. But more to the point, as long as the Mexican commuter can live on the Mexican side he can afford to work for less than his Mexican American brother. (The Mexican American, of course, must also compete against the Mexican worker who crosses the border illegally.)

The commuter system will be much harder to abolish than the bracero program which, until its demise, was another burden on the backs of the Mexican American farm and unskilled workers.

The bracero program, initiated during World War II when farm labor was genuinely scarce, was a formal program whereby two Governments, the United States and Mexico, made an agreement to bring Mexican farm laborers [braceros] to the United States until American farm workers were again available. Though farm workers feel the bracero program lasted too long after the war, the program was successfully phased out when unemployed farm workers in the United States were able to convince authorities that such an agreement between the two countries was having an adverse effect on them. The green card commuter, on the other hand, is a bracero, who, it might be said, made his contract individually with the U.S. Government by becoming an "immigrant" in name if not in fact.

Unlike the bracero, who came here under a special temporary arrangement, a commuter as an "immigrant" has virtually a permanent status, even though he has no intention of living permanently in the United States—as does the genuine immigrant.

One of the ideas behind the march to Calexico was to recruit commuters for Chavez' union. Commuters, as the Commission report shows.

have been used as strike-breakers notably in farm labor disputes in Delano, California, and in Starr County, Texas.

Knowing that commuters are forced by poverty to be commuters, the union knew the system would continue. So Chavez extended an invitation to join the union so that commuters would not work for less than Mexican Americans along the border. Though it looks like a simple solution, it must be seen from the context of a rich economy [the United States] living next door to a poor one [Mexico].

To the Mexican commuter, joining the union is not as attractive as it looks on the surface. For one thing, he knows that besides his labor, it's his docility which the employer appreciates, and he is aware that joining the union will only alienate him from his employer. He also reasons that if he joins the union, then it will be of little value for the employer to hire him [a unionized commuter] when he can hire local unionized workers, both of whom he would have to pay the same amount.

Domingo Arredondo, strike chairman of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, who participated in the labor dispute at Starr County, discussed his attempt to recruit commuters in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Farm Workers.

"The problem about these green carders is that they come to work from Mexico every day. They will come in the morning and they will go back at night."

After claiming that growers had raised the pay of commuters so they would not join the union, Arredondo testified that "we went and talked to these people [commuters] at the bridge, international bridge. We told them to cooperate with us for better wages and working conditions, but they always say that . . . they would sign but they would probably get laid off their jobs. So, really we couldn't get nowhere convincing them that a union is something that a worker needs."

As the Commission's staff report points out, there is also, but to a smaller extent, commuter traffic across the American-Canadian border. However, the report continues, "Canadian commuters do not depress local economic conditions, as do Mexican commuters, because they live in a substantially identical cost-of-living economy, work in highly unionized occupations, and are highly unionized themselves. Being well assimilated into the labor force, they offer no undue competition to American labor."

The Commission staff report notes that "there is wide disagreement about the actual extent of the commuter traffic. An Immigration and Naturalization Service survey on January 11 and 17, 1966, counted a total of 43,687 commuters. The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL–CIO, on the other hand, has estimated the number to be closer to 150,000. While the former estimate includes only daily commuters working along the border, the latter includes aliens remain-

ing here for periods of weeks or months, usually working in areas farther north."

Because the people involved in this commuter controversy are used to dealing with each other on a friendly basis for generations, and think of the border as an artificial line drawn by latecomers, the issue is one not only of great economic import but also of cultural significance.

Between the two countries, writes J. Fred Rippy in his "The United States and Mexico," "there have been no natural barriers, the two nations being separated by an imaginary line, a barbed wire fence, an easily forded river, an undergrowth of mesquite or chaparral. Citizens of both nations have passed back and forth with little difficulty or interruption, or have settled in neighboring states amidst natural surroundings which have not repelled them by their unfamiliar aspects. . . ."

There's only one catch. On one side of the border, or *frontera,* is a rich Nation with the highest standard of living in history. On the other side is a poor Nation with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of cheap labor.

"The Mexican aliens, as a group, are a readily available, low-wage work force which undermines the standards American workers generally enjoy throughout the rest of the country," said the 1968 Report of the Senate Migratory Labor Subcommittee. "More importantly, the normal play of free enterprise principles is subverted and prevented from operating to develop standards along the border commensurate with the American standards. So long as Mexican aliens are allowed indiscriminately to work in the American economy, and take their wages back to the low-cost Mexican economy, the growth of the American standards will continue to be stultified."

Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, speaking on a proposed amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act, said:

"In El Paso [an urban Texas city], where unemployment is currently some 35 percent greater than the State average, the estimated number of commuters in 1966 was more than double the number of unemployed. In El Centro, California, [a rural area city], where the unemployment rate is currently 13.1 percent, the estimated number of commuters in 1966 was nearly double the number of unemployed."

When talking about themselves or about each other, Mexicans and Mexican Americans refer to themselves simply as "Mexicanos." The commuter problem is beginning to cut a wedge into this traditional term. When poor Mexican Americans have to compete for low-paying jobs against very poor Mexican nationals only the poor suffer. But resentment builds up between the poor and the very poor.

And when that happens, the border becomes a real dividing line.

3 LOS POBRES

For the Mexican American in the Southwest, poverty is often experienced part of the time in the city and the rest of the year in the country. But no matter where he might be living at the moment, Mexico and its poverty hover over him like an ominous cloud.

The closer the Mexican American is to the border, the lower his wages are—whether in the field or in the city.

Sometimes it's just a matter of a few miles.

Luis Chavez, 55, a father of nine children, who lives near Edinburg, Texas, in the border county of Hidalgo, explained this phenomenon under questioning from Cruz Reynoso, special legal consultant to the Commission.

Reynoso: Now tell me, during the time that you are in the south of Texas, approximately how much do you earn in your work as an agricultural worker?

Chavez: There are times, let's speak of certain areas, if from where I live going North, for instance, up to about 15 miles, they pay $1.15 an hour. In other places in the other direction, say, going South [toward the border] . . . they pay $1 an hour . . . . There are other areas [closer to the border] where they are paying less than a dollar.

But traveling 15 miles north from his Rio Grande Valley is not enough for Chavez to make ends meet. It is not far enough from the border and the cheap labor offered by his Mexican brothers across the line.

So Chavez must go part of the year to the most un-Mexican of places, Michigan.

"Due to the lack of sufficient economic development and the declining state of agriculture . . . poverty is most acutely felt in the fields of the Rio Grande Valley," the social action department of the Texas Catholic Conference told the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor. "The overwhelming majority of hired farm workers in this State are Mexican American. Because of the lack of opportunities in this area, 88,700 Texas farm workers (not including their families) are forced to migrate from their homes every year in search of employment. Unfortunately, because of the vast supply of 'green carders', that is, people who have been granted immigrant status but who live in Mexico and work in the United States, the domestic workers are unable to compete with the depressed wages that result from the availability of cheap labor to the growers. This accounts for the fact that almost one-half of the Texas migrant workers come from the four counties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley."

Chavez, who told the Commission he went to school only 1 day in his whole life and speaks no English, wants a better life for his nine children. At the time he testified, he, his wife Olivia, and their children, lived in a two-bedroom shack near Edcouch, Texas.

Turning to Mrs. Chavez, Reynoso asked how a couple with nine children can live in a two-bedroom house.

Mrs. Chavez: Well, in the children's room there is four sleeping there and in our room five girls sleep together with us.

Chavez explained that some of his neighbors in his barrio have better houses than his because some families sacrifice the schooling of their children for material benefits.

Chavez: . . . As far as I am concerned, the little that I have been able to get, to earn in one place or another, outside even the State of Texas, has been with the purpose of giving an education to my children.

After explaining that work is hard to get in the summer in the Rio Grande Valley, Chavez told the Commission he migrated about the second week in July.

Reynoso: Why did you wait until then?

Chavez: We wanted to wait for the children to finish school. . . .

Though work was relatively good in the North, Chavez continued, he sent his two older sons back to Texas in time for the beginning of school even though "the rest of the family, the small ones, we remained in order to work a little longer."

Living conditions for the Chavezes while migrating to the North are even worse than at home in Texas, Mrs. Chavez' testimony to the Commission showed. While traveling, everyone from 8 years on up works and the Chavez family usually lives in a one-room shack in labor camps, where, according to Mrs. Chavez, it is not unusual to have only one bathroom for 200 to 250 people.

Describing how the family lives in a one-room shack while migrating, Chavez told the Commission:

". . . you put some partitions and you put some cots on one side and some cots on this side and then you cook your meals on the edge where the door is, that is where the small kitchen is. And on the table we put a hot plate on top of that."

Reynoso: And the whole family lives there?

Chavez: Yes, we have to manage . . . the ceiling isn't high enough to put three cots on the top of each other, so we put cots on one side and two on the other side and two here, and two across and two criss-crossed, we sort of complete the entire family.

And how much does the Chavez family of 11 earn while migrating for about 4 months out of the year?

Chavez: Approximately when we come back home . . . the most we are able to keep [after expenses on the road] is about $1,200 to $1,300 free when we come back home.

Reynoso: And during the time, all told, how much did you earn approximately?

Chavez: Between $2,500, thereabouts . . . this is the entire family that makes those earnings, those earnings are for the entire family.

Reynoso asked one of Chavez' sons, José, 19, whether counselors at his school in Texas, which is about 90 percent Mexican American, encourage students to continue their schooling.

José: Most of the time when a student has a problem in school, he tried to go to the counselor, but she always tells you that she is too busy, she will get back to you later. Instead of going back again you just stay with it. . . .

Reynoso: How many counselors do you have at this school?

José: One.

Reynoso: How many students are there?

José: About 1,100.

Reynoso: Has there been some concern with respect to getting advice as to going to college and that sort of thing in addition to plain counseling at the high school?

José: Most of the time students that I have talked with say that the teacher says the opportunities are there to go to college which she doesn't talk about it too much to us.

Reynoso: So the young people in high school don't know anything about the opportunities?

José: Most of them don't.

Reynoso: Do you yourself hope to go on with your education if you make it through high school okay?

José: Yes, I do. . . . I would like to be a mathematics teacher.

Like the Chavezes, Jesus Garcia, 36, his wife Manuela, and their 13 children live their poverty both in the country and in the city. The difference is that Garcia lives, when not migrating, in a large urban city, San Antonio, and understands well how it is to be poor in small farming towns and in the metropolis.

While in San Antonio, the Garcias, whose children's ages range from 8 months to 15 years, live in a two-room house; a bedroom and a kitchen. Asked by Reynoso how the family of 15 sleeps, Mrs. Garcia answered: "In the bedroom I have four [beds], and I have another one in the kitchen, and that is it." Mrs. Garcia related that they have no bathroom, no shower, no television set, no telephone, and no radio set.

The summer before the hearing, Garcia migrated to Michigan and other Northern States and after 3½ months in the fields was able to bring back to San Antonio $300, after expenses. Asked what he did with the $300, Garcia answered that much of it went to paying off debts in San Antonio, where he is making payments on his two-room house.

Reynoso: And you are able to keep up with the payments?

Mrs. Garcia: No, we are not keeping up with the payments.

Turning to the husband, Reynoso asked him where he works in San Antonio.

Garcia: . . . I am working for a company, an oil company.

Reynoso: . . . and how much do you make?

Garcia: $1.35 an hour I am making now.

Reynoso: How long have you been working for this oil company?

Garcia: I have been working for them about 3 weeks . . . .

Reynoso: And before that where were you working?

Garcia: In a restaurant.

Reynoso: How much did they pay there?

Garcia: $1.15 an hour.

In the months before the hearing, Garcia, who had gone to school only 2 months in his life, had worked at what he could from the Rio Grande Valley to the Northern States, but never made more than $1.35 an hour and never for long.

Directing his questioning to Mrs. Garcia, Reynoso wanted to know whether the family participated in the food stamp program [a plan which permits poor families to buy food cheaply through the purchase of Government stamps].

Mrs. Garcia: No.

Reynoso: Why not?

Mrs. Garcia: We don't have enough money to buy the stamps.

Later, Reynoso asked the woman's teenage daughter, Maria, "Your mother said that you do not participate in the [school] program for free lunches, is that right?"

Maria: Yes.

Reynoso: And why haven't you talked to the principal about [the free lunches]?

Maria: Because I am ashamed.

Reynoso: And if you wouldn't have to ask or beg for food, if it were just offered, would you take it?

Maria: Yes, I would.

Father Ralph Ruiz, a Catholic priest who works in the barrios of San Antonio, told the Commission that even though there are many families like the Chavezes and Garcias, too many people prefer to close their eyes to the problem.

Father Ruiz: . . . They [public officials] deny hunger. You see, we have to preserve an image of San Antonio . . . people can starve and people can be hungry and poor, but let's not tell the Nation this, you know, because we suffer, our reputation suffers. We are more concerned with images than with people.

The priest told the Commission that the exposure of extreme poverty in San Antonio, by citizens' committees and a television program brought into the area FBI agents "asking questions, taking my time to prove that what we claim [poverty and hunger in the San Antonio area] is not true. I can handle these guys myself, they don't [frighten] me and they don't intimidate me. But when they go and bother people who are no match for them, I think this is a crime myself."

Father Ruiz: They [FBI agents] invade the privacy of the poor. They ask them if they are hungry, how much money they make, they go into their kitchens and into their living rooms. . . . They say they want to find out if there are hungry people in San Antonio. What do they want? These FBI agents, what do they know about hunger, about the poor? . . .

Locally, the priest told the Commission: "The welfare system intimidates our people, harasses them, asks them unnecessary questions. The family practically has to go to confession to them in order to get some help. . . ."

As for the food stamp program, Father Ruiz told the Commission that he has seen store signs saying to separate the food that can be purchased with stamps from the rest before going to the cashier.

"This is a public insult," Father Ruiz said. "Why must they have stamps? If stamps equal money, then send them money. All they do is tell the whole store there that they are under welfare. . . ."

Welfare itself, the priest continued, "has become a master over the lives of these people. They fear it."

Rubin asked him to explain.

Father Ruiz: Their total life depends [on it], what other income do they have? When characters like the FBI agents come around asking this kind of questions . . . about how much money you get, does your husband work, what do you eat, are you telling the truth. Their very existence is at stake. Their very existence depends on a paternalistic type and very inadequate type of welfare. It is the master. They get their livelihood from there, and the welfare knows it.

The priest said that the Federal Government, despite his anger with the FBI, should run the welfare programs and that the system should be changed so that people on welfare be given an incentive to work.

After pointing out that some families of four or more members have to survive on $123 a month, Father Ruiz proposed one solution:

". . . I would put a minimum according to the families, say this family should get $300 per month. If somebody works in the family and makes $100, well, then the Government would supplement $200. The way it is right now, let's say, if the mother works, a mother on welfare works, say she irons clothes or washes clothing for somebody else, to make extra dollars, she has to report that. If she lives in a housing project . . . if she reports this to the housing project her rent will come up. And if the welfare agent knows about this, her check comes down. So it is best for her not to work at all. She endangers what she is getting.

"I know a case where this lady refused to take her social security increase in money because her rent would come up and she would be losing more money than otherwise. So the person is enslaved in this circle. . . . I would give an opportunity to the people to do some work, not to be afraid of work, fearing their check will come low, or the housing rent will come up. To guarantee a monthly income, not to enslave them but to free them."

4

LA EDUCACIÓN DE MEXICANOS

When the Mexican American in the Southwest complains about having nightmares instead of the American dream, he's usually told: "Education is the answer, amigo. Get an education and your problems will be solved."

Who can argue with that? At the San Antonio hearing, however, the Commission heard experts in the field of educating bilingual and bicultural children argue with the premise behind this alleged panacea. The premise, of course, is that the Mexican American child can receive a meaningful education merely by wanting it.

Dr. George I. Sanchez of the University of Texas told the Commission that in his State "persons of Spanish surname . . . 17 years of age or older averaged 4.7 years of school, whereas the Negroes averaged 8.1, and the average of the population averaged 10 plus."

In California, that State's Advisory Committee to the Commission reported that the median school years completed for Mexican Americans was 8.6, for Negroes, 10.5, and for Anglos, 12.1.

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Why is Juanito so far behind?

One of the reasons is that many Mexican American children enter school speaking little or no English because, generally, only Spanish is spoken at home. About the first thing that Juanito encounters at school is an IQ [intelligence quotient] test—in English. Usually, he makes a bad showing because of his limited knowledge of English. This means that at best he will be considered a "slow learner" and treated accordingly; at worst he will be placed in classes for the mentally retarded. Either way, the child begins his school career with a stigma which will remain for the rest of his life. Though many educators have recommended abolishing IQ tests in the early grades—as has been done by the Los Angeles School District—others have recommended that the tests be made more realistic.

In California, Mexican American students once labeled mentally retarded showed dramatic increases in their IQ scores after taking Spanish-language tests. The report of the tests, submitted to the California Board of Education in May 1969, said that some children have been victims of a "retarding influence" by being left in the mentally retarded classes for long periods of time. The children who took part in the study were in such classes on the basis of English-language IQ tests. When they were retested in the Spanish language, the children's IQ scores jumped by as much as 28 points.

Unfortunately, such studies, as enlightening as they are, do not change other realities. Reforms, which cost money, must be implemented to change the shabby education which many Mexican Americans receive. In Texas, although State allotments to school districts are determined by the average daily attendance, also considered are the level of academic attainment and the length of teachers' experience. Consequently, inequities are created between wealthier "Anglo districts" and less affluent Mexican American districts.

A Commisson staff study of nine school districts in the San Antonio area showed that in the Northeast School District [predominantly Anglo] expenditures per pupil from all revenue sources in 1967–68 amounted to $745.07. In the Edgewood School District [predominantly Mexican American] expenditures per pupil, also from all revenue sources, amounted to $465.54. The staff report showed that 98 percent of the noncollege degree teachers employed in the nine San Antonio districts are concentrated in the predominantly Mexican American districts.

An Edgewood district student told the Commission that a teacher admitted to a class that he was not qualified to teach the course and asked the students to bear with him. Another student testified that Mexican Americans are counseled away from college and into vocational training. A high school senior said Armed Forces representatives go to the schools before graduation to induce boys to enter the service. Commissioner Hector Garcia wanted to know whether any scientists,

doctors, lawyers, or businessmen ever visited the schools to encourage graduating students to enter these fields. No, the boy answered.

Edgewood's financial situation could be improved, for example, by merging with the San Antonio Independent School District. Edgewood has unsuccessfully petitioned for merger several times to equalize Edgewood's property tax base with that of San Antonio's. But political realities are at work to make this impossible. Indeed, districts are often created to avoid integration of Anglo and Mexican American students. In one case in Texas, the students residing at Laughlin Air Force Base [89 percent Anglo] are bused through the 97 percent Mexican American San Felipe School District (in which the base is located) to the Del Rio School District [51 percent Anglo].

As a result, Federal funds are awarded the Del Rio district for the education of military dependents. For example, in 1966 Del Rio received more than $200,000 in Federal impacted aid funds, while San Felipe, whose district boundaries encompass the Air Force installation, received less than $41,000.

In an impassioned plea to the Commission, Homero Sigala, school superintendent at San Felipe, called this situation "unfair" and asked that the Commission advise the President, Congress, and the Air Force "to direct the Commander at Laughlin Air Force Base to send the students residing at Laughlin to the San Felipe schools."

Unfair though it may be, the political reality of the situation is that even though Val Verde County, where San Felipe is located, is about 50 percent Mexican American, there are no Mexican Americans on the five-member county school board. In other words, Mexican Americans have no political muscle to make much of an impression on Washington.

This might be attributed to what Dr. Jack Forbes of Berkeley's Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development described to the Commission as the "conquered population" syndrome. The indigenous people of Mexico, who included those in what is now the American Southwest, first experienced the Spanish conquest, followed by a long period of colonialism, Dr. Forbes explained. This was followed by the Anglo-American conquest of the Southwest, at the end of the Mexican-American War.

To understand the significance of this syndrome, Dr. Forbes continued, "one must of course get past the romance and mythology of the supposed westward movement of the pioneers and look at the Anglo-American conquest of the Southwest as we might look at the German march eastward against the Poles or as we might look at the Franco-Norman conquest of England, in other words, in a purely detached and objective manner."

And if we are to do this, continued Dr. Forbes, "we would see the U.S. conquest of the Southwest as a very real case of aggression and imperialism, that it involved not only the military phase of immediate conquest, but the subsequent establishment of a colonial society, a

rather complex colonial society because there was not one single colonial office to administer Mexican American people. Instead, there were many institutions that were created to control and administer Mexican American people and also to enable the dominant population to acquire almost complete control of the soil and the other forms of wealth, of the social institutions, cultural institutions, and so on.

"Now the conquest in the colonial period can be further understood if we think about a community such as the city of Los Angeles in California which has long had a large Mexican American population but in which no major institution of any kind is controlled even proportionately to numbers by the Spanish-speaking population."

The concept of conquest, the Berkeley historian told the Commission, is very often ignored but "I can't emphasize it too much because we're beginning to learn the process of conquest," particularly the "tremendous effect upon people's behavior."

"For example," Dr. Forbes continued, "a conquered population tends to exhibit certain characteristics such as apathy, apparent indifference, passivity, and a lack of motivation in relation to the goals of the dominant society."

Another dimension of the Mexican American educational quandary was posed by Dr. Manuel Ramirez, an assistant professor of psychology at Rice University, Houston, who spoke of the conflict of cultures between the Anglo and the Mexican American.

"My research has identified two different kinds of conflict," he stated. "The first type arises as a result of the fact that [the Mexican American] is led to believe that he cannot be identified with two cultures at the same time. There is one message that is given by his parents, his relatives, and other Mexican American students, who tell him that if he rejects Mexican American culture and identifies with the Anglo culture, he may be considered a traitor to his ethnic group." Dr. Ramirez went on to say: "The other message comes from teachers, employers, and Anglo friends, who tell him that if he doesn't reject the Mexican American culture, he will be unable to reap the educational and economic benefits that are in the Anglo culture.

"The second type is really a series of conflicts which come about because the Mexican American student is bringing with him a series of behaviors, perceptions, methods of viewing the world, of doing things . . . and this conflicts with the value system of the Anglo middle class." Then he concluded:

"The big problem that we face as Mexican Americans is, how can we have our children maintain as many of the Mexican American values as possible and still be a success in the Anglo world? . . . And if we could have people who are sensitive to our culture, people who understand our problems and don't take this as a criticism to some teachers, I think that people like myself and others in Texas and other parts of the Southwest are living testimony that there were some Anglo teachers who work, but there aren't enough of them."

Giving another view, Dr. Sanchez told the Commission that one of the barriers to educational reform in Texas was "the poverty of Mexican Americans and their lack of effective statewide political organization."

"[Mexican Americans] have not been heard yet as an effective political force," Dr. Sanchez said. "We number some 2½ million in the State of Texas and that political weight has not been effectively harnessed to bring about reforms."

Nevertheless, testimony at the San Antonio hearing indicated that young activists are beginning to stir in the "conquered" Mexican American community.

Homer Garcia, a student at San Antonio's Lanier High School, told the Commission how a group of students and parents fought for a change in curriculum in the predominantly Mexican American school to include such studies as chemistry, physics, algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and computer programing. According to Homer, about 500 parents and 500 students turned out to a meeting in a community hall to hear the student demands for a better education. At another Mexican American school, Edgewood High, students demanded better qualified teachers.

Howard A. Glickstein, then Acting Staff Director of the Commission, asked Homer how the turnout of parents to the Lanier High School meeting compared to the number of parents who usually attend PTA meetings.

Homer: Nobody comes to PTA meetings. For one thing, the parents really don't know what a PTA is, because they're held during the daytime when—well, my parents, for instance, can't go to the PTA meeting because they are held during the day for the convenience of the teachers. My dad works during the daytime. My mother has to take care of my brothers. I mean, it is not to their convenience at all. It's a teachers' organization, not a parent-teacher organization.

The concern of students and parents for better education at San Antonio's Mexican American schools brought about positive results, according to student testimony. Much credit was given to parents who backed the students in their demands for curriculum reforms. Community participation in implementing school reforms is essential, the Commission was told, if the powerlessness and alienation felt by the Mexican American community is to be corrected. Ignoring the community while planning reforms is not only an insult to parents, the Commission was told, but it also indicates that groups of elite educational reformers seem to think they are the only ones who know what's best for the children.

In at least three instances, Anglo educators in their testimony to the Commission revealed that cultural differences and the involvement of the Mexican American community were not even considered in preparing studies or proposing school reforms. The director of the Texas Governor's Committee on Public Education admitted that Mexican

American parents were not consulted during a 3-year study on improving education in Texas; a member of the Governor's committee related that not one top-notch Mexican American educator was consulted during this same 3-year study, and the State commissioner of education said he was not familiar with studies which indicate that Mexican Americans experience culture conflict when they enter an Anglo-oriented school system.

If regular education for Mexican Americans is inadequate and unrealistic, the education of migrant children is a national scandal.

Dr. Joseph Cardenas, director of Migrant Education for the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory and now superintendent of the Edgewood School District, estimated that the dropout rate for migrant children is about 90 percent. But more "startling," said Dr. Cardenas, is the fact that "one-fifth of migrants are school dropouts at the preschool age. That is, one-fifth of all migrant children never enroll in any school in spite of the State's compulsory attendance laws. So by the time they [migrant children] start the first grade, or they are 6 years old, you have already lost 20 percent of your population."

Of the 65,000 migrant students in Texas, less than 14 percent are in the upper six grades, Dr. Cardenas disclosed. The average income of the Texas migrant, he continued, is $1,400 a year and a "person with this amount of money will have a lot of difficulty in educating his children adequately."

The only solution, Dr. Cardenas said, is a multi-State educational program geared especially for migrant children, to follow them wherever the parents are following the crops. After agreeing that this would cost a great deal of money, Dr. Cardenas asserted that actually the only real solution is to stop migration altogether. This last drew the applause of the audience. But the perennial question loomed:

How can Mexican Americans in the border States afford to stop migrating as long as armies of cheap labor are allowed to cross the international border?

While this part of the hearing was intended to probe into the educational problems of Mexican Americans in the Southwest, something just as important emerged from the testimony: the Anglo children (and for that matter, the Negroes) had been cheated also—they had not been permitted to take advantage of the Southwest's cultural and language heritage. This became clear when Harold C. Brantley, superintendent of the United Consolidated School District of Webb County, Texas, explained his district's bilingual program.

It should be noted that the United States' first full-fledged bilingual program in public schools was not initiated in the Southwest, where its need had been apparent for generations, but in Florida—following the Cuban crisis. It was in Florida that Brantley got some ideas for the bilingual program in his school district.

The philosophy behind his approach, Brantley told the Commission, was that "I don't feel like a kid's ability to speak Spanish is a detriment. I think that it is an asset. . . . It is merely our responsibility as educators to turn this asset that these kids bring to us, where it not only becomes an asset to them, but can become an asset to the little blue-eyed, blond-haired Anglo."

Brantley's district is made up of the larger part of the rural area of border Webb County—some 2,400 square miles—and does not include the county's largest city, Laredo. The district has 987 students, 47 percent of them Mexican American and 53 percent Anglo. Without waiting for more research, specialized teachers, bilingual instructional materials, or substantial financial resources, Brantley in 1964 persuaded his staff, Anglo and Mexican American parents, and the Texas Education Agency to begin a bilingual program in his bicultural district.

Today, in the district's three elementary schools, instruction is 50 percent in Spanish and 50 percent in English in the first through fifth grades.

"I am not a linguist," Brantley explained to the Commission. "My sole service is creating [an] atmosphere where things can happen."

Brantley said his program does not ignore the fact that it is very important for schools to facilitate Mexican American children "getting into the mainstream of the dominant culture and the dominant language of the country." By the same token, Brantley continued: "We also try to stress to that child who comes from this other culture, speaking this other language [that] we want to provide him with the opportunity to improve upon his knowledge of his culture and his ability to function in his vernacular."

As for the Anglo child, Brantley said, his district tries "to create an atmosphere in the classroom where the children who come to us from the dominant culture, speaking the dominant language . . . recognize that here this little kid [Mexican American] has got something that he [Anglo] doesn't have, and that he ought to be interested in getting what this little kid can teach him."

Warming up to the subject, Brantley asked the Commission: "Now, can you begin to see what this does for the stature of this little kid that comes from this other culture with this other language? Where he is made to feel like he can do something that somebody can't do, and that he has something that this other little kid wants to learn about?"

The Commission understood.

5
NO HAY TRABAJO

When Mexico lost the Southwest to the United States, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo specifically guaranteed the property and political rights of the conquered native population. The treaty, executed on February 2, 1848, also attempted to safeguard the Mexican culture and language.

Throughout the San Antonio hearing, it became clear that Mexican Americans in the Southwest cling tenaciously to their ancestors' culture and language. But it also became evident that the spirit of the treaty has been violated.

Though Mexican Americans persist in retaining the Spanish language, they do so at the price of obtaining a second rate education because bilingualism has been suppressed and has never been accepted as an asset. Though they have kept their culture, they have had to pay for it by being stereotyped as backward or, at best, quaint. Nowhere is this more evident than in the jobs Mexican Americans have traditionally held in the Southwest and the jobs they hold now. It is almost the rule that only Mexican Americans who have been willing to sacrifice their culture and language have succeeded in an Anglo society.

Carey McWilliams in "North From Mexico" says that the "basic factor retarding the assimilation of the [Southwest Mexican], at all levels, has been the pattern of his employment.

"With few exceptions," says McWilliams, "only a *particular class* of employers has employed Mexican labor in the Southwest: large-scale industrial enterprises, railroads, smelters, copper mines, sugar beet refineries" and, of course, agriculture. . . . "Traditionally," continues the author, "Mexicans have been paid less than Anglo Americans for the same jobs. These invidious distinctions have reenforced the Mexican stereotype and placed a premium on prejudice . . . the pattern of employment . . . dictated the type and location of residence. Segregated

residential areas have resulted in segregated schools, segregated schools have reenforced the stereotype and limited opportunities for acculturation.

"In setting this merry-go-around in motion, the pattern of employment has been of crucial importance for it has stamped the Mexican as 'inferior' and invested the stereotype with an appearance of reality. . . ."

It was revealed at the San Antonio hearing that in some industries Mexican Americans are not even employed as laborers.

Under questioning, Ralph Allen, director of employee relations, El Paso Natural Gas Company, told the Commission that in the company's Permian division no Mexican Americans are employed as unskilled laborers. Working for the company is considered unusually beneficial because it does not offer the dead-end jobs Mexican Americans often get. Allen said the company's Permian division laborers must be high school graduates "because they advance from that on up through."

Commissioner Hector P. Garcia noted that in part of the operating area of the El Paso Natural Gas Company, the percentages of Mexican Americans by county are the following: Jeff Davis, 56 percent; El Paso, 44 percent; Brewster, 42.6 percent; Presidio, 40.5 percent; and Hudspeth, 29.4 percent.

In the city of El Paso, where the company makes its headquarters and is about 50 percent Mexican American, Allen testified that out of 1,150 employees only 13 percent were Mexican American.

Commissioner Garcia noted that El Paso was "practically the first settlement north of the Rio Grande that was colonized by Spaniards and Mexican Americans" and that Spanish-speaking people have been in the area for "hundreds of years." "And yet," Garcia said, ". . . you haven't been able to find one single Mexican American that you could . . . employ as a laborer . . .?"

Working for the telephone company can be advantageous because of good wages and opportunities for advancement. Telephone companies, as well as any other firms having contracts with Federal agencies, must comply with Executive Order 11246 which requires affirmative action in seeking out members of minority groups for employment.

Joe Ridgway, employment manager for the San Antonio metropolitan sector of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, was questioned about the Executive order by the Commission's Acting General Counsel David Rubin.

Rubin: You still haven't answered my question as to whether you have ever received a communication which has directed you to take affirmative action to seek out members of minority groups for employment.

Ridgway: Yes, sir, we have and are following an affirmative action program that has been presented to me.

Rubin: When was that done?

Ridgway: In November.

Rubin: Of this year?

Ridgway: Of this year.

In other words, though Executive Order 11246 was issued in 1965, Ridgway testified that a program of affirmative action in employing members of minority groups was not initiated until November of 1968, a month before the Commission hearing.

Ridgway added, however, that the program was meant to "continue" to "pursue the things that we have historically done in this area."

This exchange followed:

Rubin: Prior to speaking with staff members of the Civil Rights Commission, were you aware that less than 15 percent of your employees were members of minority groups?

Ridgway: As I remember, there was some question as to exact percentages, and that 15 percent mentioned was a little on the low side.

Rubin: Were you aware of the percentage of the total number of employees constituted by minority groups at that time?

Ridgway: Yes, I was conscious that there would be a percentage.

Rubin: But you didn't know what the percentage was?

Ridgway: The actual percentage, I did not know what it was and had no way of knowing it at that time.

Rubin: Now, your 1968 [Equal Employment Opportunity—1] form shows that out of 626 craftsmen, only 12, or under 2 percent have a Spanish surname. How do you account for this in a city that is close to 40 percent Mexican American?

Ridgway: Though I would like to answer your question, I am at a loss as to how to historically go back. It predates what I am personally acquainted with and could answer to. . . .

Yet, a couple of minutes before, Ridgway had testified that the company's new program for affirmative action in employing members of minorities was merely "to pursue the things that we have historically done in this area." Despite Ridgway's seeming confusion over the historical practice of employment discrimination, it became apparent at the hearing that historically the Mexican American and other minorities had been victims of discrimination in employment.

It was put quite bluntly when Rubin questioned Robert A. Wallace, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Rubin: Mr. Wallace, the banking industry has been said to have been traditionally—and I am quoting, "a white man's industry." Would you agree with that characterization?

Wallace: Until about 2 years ago, I would have to agree with that, yes. . . .

Wallace's reference to "2 years ago," coincides with a 1966 Treasury Department ruling that all banks receiving Federal deposits are cov-

ered by Executive Order 11246, and therefore are required to undertake affirmative policies to recruit minority group persons.

A Commission staff report, however, showed that though all banks visited reported that they had Federal deposits, only two said they had been informed of this requirement by the Treasury Department. And, only one bank reported the establishment of an affirmative program to recruit minorities. The staff report also revealed that in San Antonio, where almost half of the population is Spanish-speaking, only 5.6 percent of all bank officials were Mexican Americans, and nearly half of them were found in one bank, the Frost National Bank. Seven banks reported that none of their officials were Mexican American and five others reported that they had only one Mexican American official.

Of the clerical and office workers, 16.4 percent were Mexican American and 1.4 percent were Negro. The percentage of Mexican American office workers ranged from 100 percent in one bank (located in the predominantly Mexican American area) to less than 1 percent in two banks.

In the schools, a staff report indicted that in the San Antonio Independent School District there were 14 Mexican American administrators out of a total of 132 administrators. In the Bexar County [where San Antonio is located] Welfare Department, Mexican Americans held close to 50 percent of all jobs and nearly one-third of the supervisory and administrative positions. But, the report notes, though Mexican Americans comprised 75 percent of all welfare recipients in Bexar County, only 20 of 91 social workers, or less than 22 percent, were Mexican Americans.

In nine restaurants surveyed by the Commission staff, less than 15 percent of the customer-contact positions were held by minorities, while minorities held 93 percent of the noncustomer contact positions. The staff report showed that at the Texas Employment Commission, the State agency responsible for aiding persons in obtaining employment, Mexican Americans held less than 7 percent of the nonclerical and custodial positions in the State of Texas.

In emphasizing that the Commission was not trying to condemn one section of the country or any one industry, Commissioner Theodore M. Hesburgh said that in its 11-year history, the Commission has found that "there isn't a single city, North, South, East or West, where we have gone to, where it doesn't appear very difficult for minority groups to have some kind of adequate representation in all kinds of businesses and professions and trades.

"As a matter of fact," continued Commissioner Hesburgh, "I could say quite openly, the most difficult task we have had is with the construction trades where the minorities find it very difficult to become members of the unions."

The historical pattern of employment for Mexican Americans was perhaps best dramatized by the controversy over employment practices at Kelly Air Force Base, one of San Antonio's major employers.

There is so much argument on the subject, that between June 1966 and December 1968, there were six surveys of equal employment practices conducted at Kelly.

One of the reports, that of the Texas State Advisory Committee to the Commission, issued in June 1968, found that at Kelly Field there "are broad and glaring inequities in the distribution of supervisory and higher grade positions among Mexican Americans and Negroes. . . ."

The Advisory Committee said that among Mexican American white-collar employees at Kelly, 68.9 percent were in grades 1–5, for which the initial per annum salaries in 1966 were $3,609 to $5,331.

In the higher pay scales, the committee reported, even though Mexican Americans comprise about 44 percent of the total work force, only 8 percent of them were in the $9,221 per year and up white-collar jobs and only 5 percent were in the $7,000 and up blue-collar jobs.

The Advisory Committee also asserted that "there exists at Kelly Air Force Base and in the San Antonio community, among a significant number of Mexican American citizens and leaders, a lack of confidence in the base's management and equal employment opportunity program. The Mexican American community feels that it does not receive equal treatment and that Kelly Air Force Base management has failed to remedy this situation, despite the community's protestations. This fact takes on greater significance when it is recognized that Kelly Air Force Base is one of the largest employers of Mexican Americans in the Nation."

Dennis Seidman, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff Personnel, on the other hand, curiously concluded, after his staff conducted a study, that there was a "lack of credibility" on the part of the Mexican American community, but asserted that there did not seem "to be a significant number of employees who felt that the employment opportunity program was a negative kind of program." Seidman also told the Commission that he himself was not personally at Kelly during this particular study but drew his conclusions from reports by 12 personnel management experts who spent 6 weeks at Kelly.

Howard A. Glickstein, then Acting Staff Director of the Commission, reminded Seidman that the Commission's Texas State Advisory Committee report showed that in 1966, Mexican Americans held 11.6 percent of the starting high grade jobs at Kelly. And that in 1967 that figure was 12.3 percent.

"And your report," Glickstein continued, "I believe shows that in 1968 it was 13.7 percent.

"Now the Mexican Americans represent about 30 percent of the [higher category] employees, and about 44 to 45 percent of the total work force. Would you consider that a broad and glaring inequity?"

Seidman: I think we have considered that in the report to be an imbalance in the number of people in each of these grades as related to their proportion in the population.

Glickstein: Mr. Seidman, there is one overriding impression that I receive by reading your report, and I wonder if you would care to comment on it. It seems as though the word discrimination, or the word inequity, is just a dirty word that will not be used. Is there any reason why that is so?

Seidman: . . . We put no value either positive or negative on those words. We have no evidence to indicate that there is discrimination. We have no empirical evidence that there has been discrimination and therefore the word discrimination does not appear.

Glickstein wanted to know whether Seidman disputed a report issued by the subcommittee of the equal opportunity committee at Kelly before the hearing which asserted that "minority group members employed at Kelly during the period 1917 to 1966 did not have equal employment opportunities."

Seidman: I think the phrase . . . which projected, as it were, a historical discrimination, is just that, a projection. I don't believe there are any—there are any empirical evidence in our report to indicate that there has been discrimination, by organization, by grade, or by individuals.

Glickstein: Do you think it is possible to find out if there has been discrimination? Do you think that is a relevant consideration?

Seidman: I think it is possible. I wouldn't know at the moment how to find out, historically.

Later, Glickstein pointed out that at the rate Mexican Americans were obtaining higher grade level jobs at Kelly it would take about 17 more years to equalize the situation. "And if they were to attain a proportionate number of jobs in proportion to their representation in the entire work force, it will take until about 2000."

Seidman answered that he thought "there are many, many factors that impinge on predicting the rate of movement," and that minorities had made good progress in moving up to the higher levels especially in the past 12 months.

Later, Matt Garcia, a Mexican American attorney who had handled job discrimination cases, told the Commission he felt the Air Force survey team, headed by Seidman, had come to San Antonio, "only in an effort to negate the Texas State Advisory Committee's report." Seidman had earlier testified that it was just a "coincidence" that his team made the study just after the Advisory Committee's and just before the Commission met in San Antonio.

Attorney Garcia also charged that Seidman's contention that members of minorities were obtaining more higher paid jobs at Kelly was misleading because Seidman did not mention that more higher level positions had been created in 1968. It's true, he said, that in 1966 there were 142 Mexican Americans in the beginning category of the higher paying jobs but the number had increased to 208 in 1968.

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Furthermore, he continued, Seidman did not mention the fact that in 1967 there were 1,434 such jobs while in 1968 there were 1,520.

Maj. Gen. Frank E. Rouse, Commander of Kelly Air Force Base, told the Commission he didn't believe "there was any necessity for Mr. Seidman and his [surveying] team in the first place," but he agreed that there is "an ethnic imbalance" in the number of good jobs Mexican Americans have at Kelly. However, he agreed with Seidman that this was not caused by "discriminatory acts either in the recent past, or the fairly distant past."

I must believe what I see, can touch, and prove. And I think the conclusion I come to is that under the merit promotion system, rightly or wrongly, the opinion is that the best people were promoted."

Despite General Rouse's contention that discrimination must be seen and touched to be proven, Mexican Americans have long noted that racial prejudice against them has been perpetrated in a more subtle way than against blacks but that it has been just as effective.

Prof. Daniel P. Rodriguez of Trinity University in San Antonio, who also conducted an employment opportunity study at Kelly, explained to the Commission how this subtle discrimination works.

During his investigation, Rodriguez told the Commission, he got the impression that Kelly management "were complying with the requirement of the [equal employment opportunity] regulation without complying with the spirit of it."

Some of management's remarks, Rodriguez said, "led me to believe that among some of these men, even though they felt there was no prejudice or bias on their part, they were not even aware of it."

Rodriguez: I had one supervisor tell me that when a Mexican American was promoted you had to be careful to insure that the Anglo group there was going to accept him as a supervisor. What he left unsaid of course—and I casually pointed it out to him—was that when an Anglo was being promoted that there was never any question about whether he could handle minority group people working under him.

Glickstein: Did you think that he thought he was discriminating?

Rodriguez: I am positive that he didn't feel that he was discriminating, or that the statement he made to me was—that there was anything wrong with it. I think he was a little bit surprised when he realized what he had said.

The historical pattern of Mexican American employment can be changed abruptly for the better with imagination, know-how, sensitivity, and money. This was the message conveyed to the Commission by Joseph B. Andrasko, director of industrial relations for the aeronautics division of the Ling-Temco-Vought Aerospace Corporation of Dallas, in one of the hearing's most positive presentations.

Andrasko said that in 1965, his company, which builds airplanes, foresaw the need for about 14,000 semi skilled and skilled workers for its expansion program. Dallas, where the company is located, could not

be a main source of labor because that city had a less than 2 percent unemployment rate. It was suggested that the Rio Grande Valley, whose unemployment rate is very high as a result of the cheap labor available just across the border, be considered as a source for workers.

"This came as much of a shocker," Andrasko said, "as the Rio Grande Valley is approximately 450 to 500 miles from our plant. . . ."

Nevertheless, the company took the plunge and after 2½ years of negotiations with local, State, and Federal agencies, the company reached an agreement to train 750 persons in the Rio Grande Valley in a period of 12 months. Of the 750 persons who entered the training program, 684 finished the course and 622 were still on the payroll at the time of the hearing. The trainees, 97 percent of them Mexican Americans, who could not have hoped to earn more than $1,200 to $1,500 a year in the Valley, started making $5,000 to $6,000 a year after 5 weeks' training.

It was quite an undertaking, considering the workers had to be uprooted from the Rio Grande Valley to live in a Dallas suburb, where they would have to look for housing and schools for their children. These problems were solved, Andrasko said, by assigning company counselors to help the workers get settled in Dallas.

"The counselors were Mexican American," Andrasko said, "all of them. And we did it by design."

Federal and State funds provided wages for the trainees while they trained, salaries for instructors, rent for equipment that had to be taken to the Valley, and transportation for the workers from the Valley to Dallas. It cost the State and Federal Government about $1,200 per trainee.

Was the money well spent?

Andrasko told the Commission that the company made a survey which showed that when the trainee started working full-time it took about 18 months for the newly trained worker to pay $1,200 in taxes.

"As a taxpayer I'd say you're darn right [the money was well spent]," Andrasko said.

The trainees, Andrasko added, turned out to be "conscientious, hard workers and followed instructions." As a matter of fact, he continued, the first two wing panels which they built after training were found to have no defects by the inspectors.

The team of Mexican Americans who were brought to Dallas from the Valley broke the myth that Mexican Americans can do only certain types of work, Andrasko said. All they needed was an opportunity to prove themselves.

6 LA LEY

Justice is the most important word in race relations. Yet too many Mexican Americans in the Southwest feel with David Sanchez, Los Angeles Brown Beret leader, that "to Anglos justice means 'just us'."

La Ley or The Law, as Mexican Americans call the administration of justice, takes forms that Anglos—and even Negroes—never have to experience. A Mexican American, though a third generation American, for instance, may have to prove with documents that he is an American citizen at border crossings while a blue-eyed blond German immigrant, for example, can cross by merely saying "American."

Besides the usual complaints made by racial minorities about police brutality and harassment, Mexican Americans have an added problem: sometimes they literally cannot communicate with the police. A Commission report told of a young Mexican American, who, while trying to quell a potentially explosive situation, was arrested because the police officers, who did not understand Spanish, thought that he was trying to incite the crowd to riot.

In another case, the Commission report told of a Mexican American in Arizona who was held in jail for 2 months on a charge of sexually molesting his daughter. As it turned out, he had been mistakenly charged with this offense, but he did not voice any objections at the time because he did not understand the proceedings and no interpreter was provided for him. A probation officer, who spoke Spanish, talked to the defendant later and upon learning the facts explained the situation to the local magistrate, who dismissed the case.

One of the many reasons a Mexican American cannot relate well to *La Ley* is that he doesn't see many of his own in positions of authority serving on agencies which administer justice. The 1960 census indicated that Mexican Americans represent about 12 percent of the Southwest's population. In 1968, only 7.4 percent of the total uniformed personnel in law enforcement agencies in the Southwest were Mexican Americans, according to those agencies answering a Commission questionnaire.

As for policymaking positions, the Commission learned in its survey that only 10 law enforcement agencies are headed by Mexican Americans and eight of these are in communities of less than 10,000 in population.

(A Commission study of the grand jury system of 22 California counties concluded that discrimination against Mexican Americans in juror selection is "as severe—sometimes more severe—as discrimination against Negroes in grand juries in the South.")

In East Los Angeles, which is the largest single urban Mexican American community in the United States, "friction between law enforcement and the Mexican American community" is on the increase, according to a psychiatric social worker, Armando Morales.

Morales is State chairman of the California Unity Council, Police Community Relations Committee, which is composed of members from five statewide Mexican American organizations—the Community Service Organization, the League of United Latin American Citizens, (LULAC) the Mexican American Educators, the American GI Forum, and the Mexican American Political Association.

One of the reasons for this increasing friction, Morales told the Commission, was that "gradually the Mexican American community is becoming much more aggressive as to its social demands, its social needs. It is becoming more active. And, at the same time, law enforcement is becoming much more suppressive, hence creating that much more friction between the two." Morales also contended that police aggressive behavior seems to be condoned by high level government.

Morales charged "indifference and apathy to the justice and needs of the Mexican American" by the Federal Government. He said his council investigated 25 cases of alleged police brutality, five of which were submitted for consideration to the FBI. The FBI referred them to the U.S. Department of Justice, which in turn ignored the matter, according to Morales.

The Reverend John P. Luce, rector of the Epiphany Parish in East Los Angeles, agreed with Morales that communication between Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles police had broken down and said he feared "we are on a collision course in Los Angeles" along the lines of a "police-barrio confrontation." Rev. Luce charged that the Los Angeles police and sheriff departments "refuse to talk with militant and political leaders with whom they might disagree, with young people, with a whole variety of activist people who want change."

The Anglo clergyman told the Commission that the indictment of 13 Mexican American leaders in the March 1968 East Los Angeles High School walkouts has led to the strong feeling that "the [Los Angeles] district attorney has singled out the Mexican community because he thought they were weaker than some other communities" but that he "miscalculated on this point, because the Mexican is organizing even that much more."

A Commission staff report said that "one of the most common complaints (throughout the Southwest) was that Anglo juvenile offenders are released to the custody of their parents and no charges are brought, while Mexican American youths are charged with offenses, held in custody, and sent to a reformatory."

A counselor for the New Mexico State Employment Office told the Commission's Advisory Committee:

". . . I was very shocked when I became involved in working with young [Mexican American] people . . . and found that charges were made against them, such as stealing cantaloupes out of a farmer's field, curfew violations, being truant from school, and things like this. These would all be on record and they all have quite extensive juvenile records. Among the Anglo people I work with, this just [isn't] done. I don't think the Anglo children are this much better."

The Commission's report further stated that it is felt throughout the Southwest that "the most serious police harassment involves interference with attempts by Mexican Americans to organize themselves in order to assert their collective power."

To the advocates of brown or Chicano power, the Texas Rangers, or "*Los Rinches,*" are the symbols of this repression. The Texas Rangers is an elite 136-year-old statewide law enforcement agency under the Texas Department of Public Safety. At the time of the hearing there were 62 Texas Rangers, none of them Mexican Americans.

To the Mexican American, especially the poor, such as the farm worker in the Rio Grande Valley, the Rangers in their Stetson hats, fancy boots, hand tooled revolvers, and holsters personify everything they fear: tough-talking, rancher-grower types who can run you out of town at the slightest suspicion that the Mexican Americans want to assert themselves.

"The Rangers are the cowboys and we're the Indians," say Mexican Americans.

Farm workers, labor organizers, and civil rights workers testified before the Commission that the Texas Rangers break agriculture worker strikes in the Rio Grande Valley through force and intimidation. The unionization of farm workers is seen as a holy war in Texas where farm hands get no workmen's compensation, no State minimum wage, no unemployment and disability insurance, and where there are no mandatory standards in farm worker housing. (In contrast, California requires by law all of these things.)

Reynaldo de la Cruz, 26, a farm worker and father of six children, who had been arrested six times for union activities, told the Commission he joined the union because of "what every Mexican American farm worker faces, that they have been cheated too long . . . because I had been cheated too many times. [I joined the union] so that we could fight for our rights and for the rights of other people that don't know how to defend themselves."

Asked what the feeling of Mexican Americans is toward the Texas Rangers, José M. Martinez, a farm worker, told the Commission:

"Many people hate them, many people are afraid, because the majority of the Mexicans are not armed. They [Rangers] are armed. And when the Rangers are coming, then the people are afraid. They are

afraid of being hit, or being pushed around. . . . The minute that you hear the Rangers are coming, everybody hides. If you are on strike, if you know the Rangers are coming, then they don't want to strike. This is the feeling of the people in the Valley. They are afraid."

Trying to determine what Mexican Americans thought of Government as an administrator of justice, Howard A. Glickstein, then Acting Staff Director of the Commission, asked farm worker de la Cruz whether in his work as a union organizer he saw the State government and State officials as friends or enemies.

De la Cruz: Well, considering that the Rangers are State officials, I think they are our enemies.

Glickstein: How do you view the Federal Government? What do you think of the role the Federal Government has played or hasn't played?

De la Cruz: Well, I am not too sure about the Federal Government. But if they were really our friends, then something would have been done when the Texas Rangers were messing with the strike.

Earlier, Pete Tijerina, executive director of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, had noted that the U.S. Attorney General had intervened on behalf of Negro cases throughout the South but that "not once, not once, has the Attorney General . . . intervened in any Mexican American case."

The Reverend Edgar A. Krueger, an ordained minister whom the Texas Council of Churches sent to the Rio Grande Valley as an observer during a long farm workers' strike, told the Commission of his experiences with the Texas Rangers, including his arrest.

He said he went to Mission, Texas, one night, in the lower Rio Grande Valley, where he heard farm workers would be picketing. When he, his wife, and their 18-year-old son arrived at Mission he learned that 12 farm workers had been arrested. He spotted Ranger Captain Alfred Y. Allee and other Rangers in their parked cars in the drive-in bank on the other side of the railroad tracks. The Reverend Krueger said that since it was Friday night, "when people just gather, visit, and watch the cars go by," there were about 200 people on both sides of the tracks. But no one was trying to gather a crowd, no one was talking to the group, or trying to convince anyone to become a union member," the Reverend Krueger said. "No one was trying to stop the train, nor was anyone carrying a picket sign at that particular time. All we wanted to do was to find out where the persons had been taken that were arrested."

When the train arrived, the Texas Rangers with very long flashlights signaled the train to pass, the minister said, and he decided to take a picture with his wife's small camera from a hundred feet away. "About that time Captain Allee walked right straight down the west side of the street toward me," recalled the Reverend Krueger, "and said, as he was walking up, 'Krueger, I am sick and tired of seeing you around.'

He grabbed me by the collar and the seat of the pants and lifted me practically to the center of the street."

Mrs. Krueger then took a picture of what was happening, the Reverend Krueger said.

"And then Captain Allee yelled, 'Grab that woman.'," the minister told the Commission. "Another Ranger grabbed my wife, and I didn't see it when it happened, but he grabbed her. But I did see later on that he had her arm twisted behind her back."

Captain Allee then turned the minister over to another Ranger and walked up to a farm worker, Magdaleno Dimas, who was eating a hamburger, the Reverend Krueger said.

"Captain Allee slapped the hamburger out of his hand," the Reverend Krueger continued, "and then with double hands slapped him in the face. . . . And then they took me [and Dimas] to the passing train. Since they were running around so rapidly there in something of a frenzy, I was very fearful when they held Dimas, it seemed like his head was just a few inches from the metal that was sticking out from the passing train, and held us there beside the train while it was passing."

After manhandling Dimas some more, the minister, his wife, Dimas, and a friend were thrown into the back seat of a Ranger car and searched, the Reverend Krueger said. Seeing that the pipe of one of the men had bounced off the car doorway, the minister said: "It seemed like a very natural thing sitting on the edge of the seat like that to reach down and pick up his pipe. At that time Ranger Jack Van Cleve, with tremendous force, slapped me in the cheek." The Reverend Krueger, his wife, and friends were arraigned for unlawful assembly. This was a year and a half before the Commission hearing and up to then their case had not come to trial. In charging that the Texas Rangers and sheriff's deputies were "strike breakers," and completely partial to the growers, the Reverend Krueger told the Commission that a sheriff's deputy told him [Krueger] that if he really wanted to help "these people" he should tell them to go back to work.

"And there was an occasion when Captain Allee did say that if the [striking] farm workers wanted jobs he would see that they would get jobs," the Reverend Krueger told the Commission. "And he also said that if they didn't go to work that it would have a depressing effect on the whole Valley, and they would suffer and the whole Valley would suffer if they didn't get the cantaloupes out."

But perhaps the Reverend Krueger's most serious charge was that mass arrests by Rangers and other law enforcement officers usually followed any success the strikers or union had. "For example," said the minister, "the night when my wife and 114 other persons were arrested. This was on the same day, I believe, that the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights finished their hearing in Starr County, in Rio Grande City, and it seemed that that hearing

gave some support to the union's cause, and that same night people were arrested."

Arnulfo Guerra, a Rio Grande Valley attorney, charged that local and State government openly opposed the strike and the farm workers' right to organize and he said that the Rangers in particular "were entirely and completely partial to the growers. And I say this because the people who called them [Rangers] in was the county administration, and the county administration was completely and totally partial to the growers. It was a one-sided affair, and they [Rangers] were excessively partial. . . ."

Ranger Captain Allee, a 36-year veteran of the Texas Rangers, appeared before the Commission on the closing day of the San Antonio hearing.

Commission Acting General Counsel Rubin asked him why the Texas Rangers were sent to Starr County during the farm workers' strike.

Captain Allee: To keep peace and order and to protect the lives and property and to assist the sheriff's department.

Rubin: What was occurring at that time to warrant [the Rangers going to Starr County]?

Captain Allee: It is my understanding that it had been going on a good while and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee was trying to organize the employees there.

Rubin: And that was the reason why . . . why . . . the Rangers [were] sent?

Captain Allee: That's right. There had been trouble, there was a railroad trestle had been burned and I had my sergeant down there before then and had one or two Rangers there. . . . [the Rangers] were sent . . . to make [an] investigation. . . .

Asked why he had arrested the Reverend Krueger, Captain Allee said "he came up and talked to me, and he got pretty arrogant about it, and he was poking me on the chest with his finger and accused me of putting his men in jail. My people, he called them, my people. And he was loud and abusive.

"And I got Reverend Krueger by the belt and the collar and took him over to the car. On the way over there Mrs. Krueger, she had a camera and she was with him, and about that time I heard someone say, look out, captain. And he said, give me that camera, Mrs. Krueger, and he was Ranger Jack Van Cleve, and he said she attempted to hit me over the head with it."

Rubin wanted to know why the minister was arrested.

Captain Allee: I just got through telling you this, for [being] loud and abusive, and disturbing the peace. Language, of course, one thing and another is why I arrested him.

Rubin: What charge was placed against him?

Captain Allee: I don't know. I didn't file the complaint. I can get that for you and send it to you, if you wish.

Rubin: Did Reverend Krueger resist arrest?

Captain Allee: No, he didn't resist arrest.

Rubin: What did he do? You said that you lifted Reverend Krueger by the seat of his pants?

Captain Allee: No, I didn't lift him by the seat of the pants, I said I got him by the belt.

Rubin: By the belt?

Captain Allee: Yes, sir.

Rubin: Why was it necessary to do that?

Captain Allee: Well, I don't know why it was necessary to do it. . . . I usually grab a fellow by the belt if I am going to take him somewhere. Of course, he didn't especially want to go after I talked to him there a little while.

Later, Rubin wanted to know about the arrest of farm worker Dimas and whether the captain had slapped him.

Captain Allee: I slapped a hamburger out of his hand.

Rubin: Why did you do that?

Captain Allee: Well, he was trying to tell me something, I don't know what it was, and he was spitting that mustard. . . .

Asked what reputation the Texas Rangers have among Mexican Americans, Captain Allee said: "Among Mexican Americans I think they have a good reputation. I worked around the Mexican people all my life. I had a big percentage of the people of Starr, Texas, of Mexican American people send a petition into Austin and I didn't request it, asking the Rangers to stay there because they feared violence and bloodshed. And that petition is on file. . . ."

Questioned whether there were workers in the fields during the strike, Captain Allee responded: "Oh, yes, there were workers in the fields, lots of people working in the fields. I couldn't tell you whether they were from Starr County or not. Some of them were and some of them from across the border, the green card workers.

Glickstein: There were a lot of green card workers?

Captain Allee: I don't know how many.

Glickstein: They come across [the border] in the morning and go home at night?

Captain Allee: That's right.

It was as if Captain Allee was reminding Mexican Americans what they have known for many years: If they rock the boat, they can always be replaced by cheaper Mexicans from across the border.

CONCLUSION

In restrospect, perhaps the most positive result of the hearing was that barrio Mexican Americans came out of it with a feeling that the Government does care about them.

This was no small accomplishment. To Mexicans *el gobierno*, the Government, has traditionally been a natural enemy. Until the Revolution of 1910, which at last made Mexico a free country, Mexicans experienced foreign dictatorships—Spanish colonialism and the French imposed Emperor Maximilian, for example—and domestic dictatorships, Santa Anna and Porfirio Diaz.

It is not surprising therefore that Mexican Americans have an inherent distrust of Government. The older ones remember that during the depression of the 1930's, the Government "incited" Mexican resident aliens to leave the United States to what was almost certain worse poverty in Mexico. Many Mexican Americans over 30 in the border areas can remember unpleasant moments at the hands of the U.S. Immigration and Customs agents at border crossings. They remember learning to live with the fear of deportation posed by *el gobierno* which at any moment might demand proof that they're American citizens and not Mexican nationals.

To many Mexican Americans, dealings with *el gobierno* have always been unpleasant. The contacts with teachers, employment officials, social workers, police, and other representatives of *el gobierno* have,

in many instances, left behind memories of mistreatment and insensitivity.

With the San Antonio hearing there was a breakthrough for Mexican Americans who have felt neglected, if not persecuted, in the past by their Government. They had been studied many times before San Antonio, but at the hearing, for the first time on a national platform, the problems of the Mexican American were explored not only in the general sense but also in the specific.

The obvious challenges of discrimination in employment, competition of cheap labor from Mexico, inadequate education, police harassment, and cultural conflicts were again aired with a monotonous consistency, but there was a difference. This time the investigators talked face to face with members of the "establishment" involved in the areas indicated above and the Commission dealt in precise names, organizations, and systems accused of insensitivity toward the Mexican American.

The hearing did not end in a tone of: "Look, we've got problems and something must be done." Instead, it ended saying in effect: "Look, these people and these situations are keeping us back and this has to be done."

Something else very valuable came out of the hearing—an underscoring of the gravity of the problems that are now bubbling to the surface in the Mexican American community. Only the most insensitive spectator could miss the sense of urgency of the problems of the Mexican Americans and the realization that delay in reaching solutions could only exacerbate those problems.

Following the hearing, though not necessarily because of it, the State of Texas appropriated money for its first bilingual education program, passed a minimum wage law for farm workers, raised the ceiling on money to be made available for welfare benefits, and enacted legislation to prevent confiscation of property outright for a missing delinquent house payment.

The hearing represented another step in a trend toward understanding of the Mexican American which started a few years ago. The creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs in June of 1967, by President Lyndon B. Johnson, showed a growing awareness by Washington of the Spanish-speaking population.

Making the Committee a permanent agency under President Nixon further indicated that the National Government recognized that the Mexican American had unique problems that required separate consideration from the seat of power.

The formation of the Southwest Council of La Raza and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund with the help of Ford Foundation money showed that the private sector was also interested.

But what probably has most warmed the Mexican American to *el gobierno* is the Government's growing concern for the uneducated and rural Mexican American.

Congress' refusal to extend the bracero program was a significant victory for the Mexican American farm workers who claimed braceros were taking jobs away from them.

The Federal Government's funding of the California Rural Legal Assistance through the Office of Economic Opportunity was further proof that Washington cared about Mexican Americans, who comprise about 67 percent of the State's agriculture workers.

The CRLA was founded on the philosophy that the poor, like the rich, are entitled to good lawyers who take the time to serve their needs.

Mexican American farm workers who, with their fellow black and Anglo colleagues, are the only major occupational group excluded from unemployment insurance coverage and other federally conferred benefits such as collective bargaining legislation, had now someone to represent them in court.

At least technically, the Mexican American farm worker could now defend himself not only from powerful growers but from the Government itself.

As for education, the passing of the Bilingual Education Act of 1967 recognized the absurdity of punishing children for speaking Spanish in the school grounds.

It also showed that the time would come when the knowledge of a second language would become an asset instead of a liability.

A stirring has occurred in the Mexican American community itself. New groups are emerging, older ones are moving in new directions. There is a sense of mobility, typified by expressions of solidarity and demands for change. Not untypical of the mood was the gathering, several months after the San Antonio hearing, of some 1,000 Mexican Americans in Del Rio, Texas, to protest the termination of a VISTA program.

The hearing can be described as a piece of a mosaic, and it provided the groundwork for an even better understanding by the Government of the Mexican American. The information from the hearing was also extremely valuable in the comprehensive studies on Mexican American education and the administration of justice in the Southwest undertaken by the Commission.

So stark was the picture of the Mexican American in the Southwest drawn by the words of the witnesses, so evident was the need for additional resources, that the Commission subsequently approved the conversion of its temporary field office in San Antonio to a permanent installation.

Despite all this, and because change takes time, those attending the hearing could easily come to the conclusion that Mexican Americans have been victims of fraud.

Much of the testimony showed how Mexican Americans have been cheated of things most Americans take for granted: their right to their language, their culture, their color.

This was perhaps most poignantly expressed when Commissioner Hector P. Garcia asked Irene Ramirez, a San Antonio high school girl, whether she wanted to have "nice things."

"Of course," answered Irene, "but from the very beginning we are taught . . . I mean, this is an impossible dream."

"What is impossible, dear?" Garcia asked.

"Going to college and achieving something . . . ," she answered.

This exchange dramatized to those attending the hearing that though lip service has always been paid to the theory that Mexican Americans "are like any other Americans," in reality they are not.

The hearing showed that the Mexican American has been made to feel negatively about his Mexican background—to the point where even the word "Mexican" has become a liability.

As a result, Mexican Americans have tried to assimilate into Anglo society as quietly as possible. Some have succeeded. But, if the testimony is to be believed, the attempt at assimilation has failed for too many.

The feeling among activist Mexican Americans—who prefer to call themselves Chicanos—is that Spanish-speaking people should resist any attempt to become American at the expense of their language and culture.

Chicanos also emphasize that assimilation for assimilation's sake has been oversold and that it must be learned once and for all that you can't turn a brown child into a white child through patriotic rhetoric.

The hearing may also have helped kill the myth that with time Mexican Americans will assimilate as have the Irish, Italians, Polish, and other ethnic groups. This argument crumbles with the obvious fact that the United States and Mexico share a 1,800-mile open border, and not an ocean as do the United States and Ireland.

The influence of Mexico on the Mexican American will continue as long as Mexico is there.

The Americanization of the Mexican American has too often meant that he must shun his background and assume a ridiculous role of being what has been described as a "tanned Anglo".

The hearing may have helped bring home an obvious historical fact: Mexicans are not strangers to this land, especially in the Southwest. They are indigenous to it.

The hearing may have focused a growing feeling among Mexican Americans. That is, that they understand the importance of becoming Anglicized but that in the process they insist that Anglos become Mexicanized, if the melting pot theory of America is to have value.

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